

Lit



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Facts & Figures from the Colorado Literacy Research Initiative

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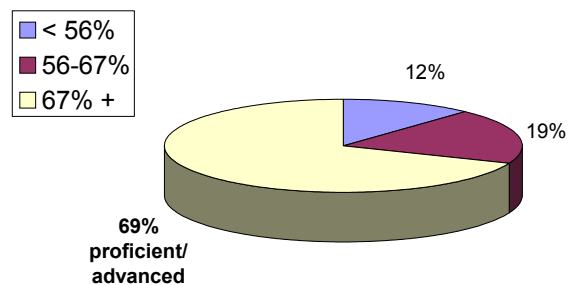
October 26, 2002

Educational Attainment of Adults Predicts CSAP Reading Achievement of Fourth Graders, 2002

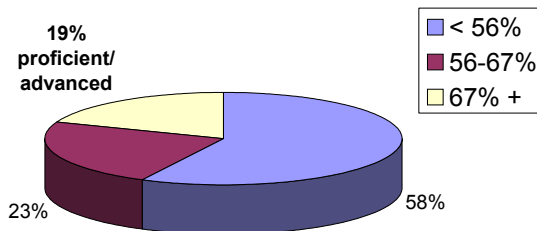
How much does the educational attainment of parents, caregivers, and other adults in Colorado communities affect how students perform on the CSAP academic achievement tests? Consider the following findings regarding the latest fourth grade reading scores.

Where most adults are well-educated, most students score highly on achievement tests. Of the districts ranking in the top third for well-educated adults, the majority (69% plus) also ranked in the top third on the results of the 2002 CSAP reading test of fourth graders.

Proficient or Advanced Percentages for Fourth Grade CSAP Reading Scores for the Top Third of School Districts on Adult Educational Attainment



Proficient or Advanced Percentages for Fourth Grade CSAP Reading Scores for the Bottom Third of School Districts on Adult Educational Attainment



Where more adults are poorly educated, more students score poorly on achievement tests. Of the districts ranking in the bottom third on adult education levels, the majority (57%) also ranked in the bottom third on the 2002 CSAP reading test of fourth graders.

The reverse is equally true.

Where most adults are well-educated, few students score poorly on achievement tests. Of the districts ranking in the top third for well-educated adults, only 12 percent ranked in the bottom third on the 2002 CSAP reading test of fourth graders.

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Educational Attainment of Adults Predicts
CSAP Reading Achievement of Fourth Graders, 2002

Where most adults are poorly educated, few students score highly on achievement tests. Of the districts ranking in the bottom third on adult education levels, only 19 percent ranked in the top third on the 2002 CSAP reading test of fourth graders.

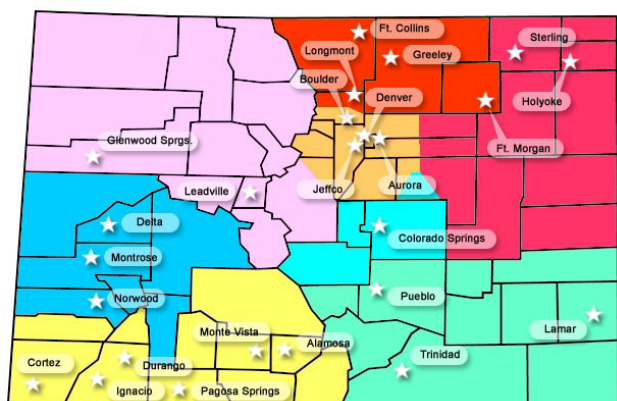
These data demonstrate why the Colorado Department of Education has a broad mission not limited to school-age children. A substantial number of adults do not have the educational foundation and basic skills to provide adequate educational support to their children. If not addressed, low educational attainment can become a generational phenomenon.

Colorado School Districts by Fourth Grade CSAP Reading Achievement Level and Adult Educational Attainment, 2002

Percent of adults high school graduates	Percent of students proficient or advanced on 4 th grade CSAP reading test			Total
	67% or more	56-67%	Less than 56%	
90% or more	29 69%	8 19%	5 12%	47 100%
80-89%	18 35%	22 42%	12 23%	52 100%
Less than 80%	9 19%	11 23%	27 58%	42 100%
Total	56 40%	41 29%	44 31%	141 100%

Pearson Chi-Square = 36.034, p < .001

CDE's Center for At-Risk Education (CARE) supports state and local programs to encourage parents and other adults to improve their own education levels. These programs include educational services, such as: Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, Family Literacy, Even Start, Migrant Even Start, refugee instruction, and General Educational Development (GED) Testing as well as providing learning resources and technical assistance to local projects statewide.



SOURCES

- Assessment Unit, Colorado Department of Education. *The Latest CSAP Results*. (4th Grade Reading spreadsheet) Available at: http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/as_latestCSAP.htm
- Colorado Demography Section, Division of Local Government, Colorado Department of Local Affairs. *Geographic Comparison (Tables) by Subject Matter*. Available at: <http://www.dlg.oem2.state.co.us/demog/Census/SFGeoComparisons.htm>

Notes on the Data

Annual state summaries of Colorado Student Assessment Program test scores report differences in results based on gender, race/ethnicity, disability status, poverty, migrant status, language background, and time in school and district. One variable is conspicuously absent from this list: parental educational attainment.

The potential impact of a parent's (or other adult caregiver's) own level of education on how well a student does in school is intuitively obvious, but, where CSAP scores are concerned, there is not much data on that relationship. The likeliest explanation for the lack of attention given to this critical variable is that it would have to be self-reported by students who might not be the most reliable sources of accurate information.

To gain some insight into the impact of parents' education on their children's academic success, 2000 Census data on the educational attainment of adults age 25 and over was utilized. Because this variable is not yet available for school district geography, district summary scores for the fourth grade CSAP reading test were combined with adult educational attainment data for the city or county closest to boundaries of each district.